

31 October 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Product Review Division

SUBJECT : Systematic Product Review

1. The focus of my review has been on the analysis and production of current intelligence items relating to "tactical" weapons systems, and the operational activity of general purpose (conventional) military forces. The principal emphasis lies, of course, with those ground, air, and naval forces of the USSR and the PRC. Early in the review, however, I discovered that a majority of the military-related items in the daily reporting dealt with forces and capabilities other than those of the major communist countries. As a result, my own review has been expanded to include that reporting on significant changes in the military force capabilities of all nations. A number of constraints, however, preclude the analysis of that reporting in this initial monthly summary. Consequently, the following remarks are limited to my analysis of current intelligence reporting on the air, ground, and naval forces of the USSR and PRC.

2. An initial and continuing problem has been the determination of intended readership. Although each of the publications (NIB, DIN, WHSS, ect.) purport to be directed toward, or in support of, National-level decisionmakers; the content of articles, and in some cases the quality of presentation, frequently belie this claim. I am particularly disturbed over DIA's "Defense Intelligence Notice." First of all, the initial impression one receives is that the plethora of documents add up to "much ado about nothing." Upon further consideration, however, one becomes aware that the practice of independent distribution of specific items may have some merit. I have been able to confirm with several desk analysts in DIA that this practice does, in fact, facilitate internal distribution to the various analysts in DIA. There is nothing wrong with this per se, but it seems wholly inconsistent with DIA's stated purpose of the DIN--to "provide intelligence in support of future decisions with respect to national security policy or posture." The point is that here is a production program which claims to be designed to support national policy, but, in fact, is administered in such a fashion to be of particular benefit to other "low-level" analysts.

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3. The content of these documents, particularly the DIA DIN, often appears to be inconsistent with its stated purpose. Of the four DIN articles on Soviet/WP ground forces which appeared during the month of October (a surprisingly low number), none appeared to be of direct interest to national-level policymakers. One of the three articles on Soviet/WP air forces--introduction of new fighters into Poland--might be of some interest to MBFR negotiators. The most interesting article of all--testing of an anti-aircraft laser system--would be of great concern to officials in the R&D community. The most mundane articles--from a national-level viewpoint--must be those articles addressing the Soviet Navy. Some five out of nine articles dealt with ship locations, two were concerned with shipyard activity, and two others reported Soviet Naval reactions to US Naval activity. Although few of the DIN articles could be considered of interest to policymakers, all would be of direct interest to military planners and local theater area commanders. The problem here is that the US military establishment is structured so that the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff are, by law, excluded from the operational command of military forces; those functions are assigned to the Unified and Specified Commanders. Presumably, (in fact, most certainly) the intelligence staffs overseas and in the field are producing the same reports.

4. Many of the aforementioned criticisms apply to the NIB as well. The NIB appeared to be less inclined to include "military hardware" items on its pages (only eight USSR and PRC military-related items during the month). With one major exception--a thoughtful and very informative comparison of military forces on the SINO-Indian border--most of the NIB articles either located Soviet ships or commented on the introduction of tactical systems into a given area. One is again confronted with the question of relevancy or interest to a national-level readership. There is, of course, ~~no way~~ *no way* of knowing who or what agency on the NIB staff proposed such articles. A much more serious criticism, with respect to the NIB, is the absence of any T-Kh derived information. I am amazed and appalled that any interagency intelligence publication which carries a "National" title would exclude information from a major collection source. Handling and distribution constraints are unacceptable excuses.

5. The White House situation summaries available to me did not carry any items relating to USSR or PRC weapons systems or military activity.

6. In summary, my observations and impressions to date provide more questions than answers:

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- The Intelligence Community ought to once and for all identify and define the national-level readership. If one accepts the traditional definition that the National Command Authority (President, Secretary of State, and Secretary of Defense) is, in fact, the desired audience, then these documents are simply not doing the job. Further, the standard fare in each of these documents is of doubtful value to those officials several echelons below the NCA. I am beginning to wonder how much of a real trauma would be induced in the leaders of government if the current intelligence "security blanket," as presently constituted, were withheld for a prolonged period. I suspect our august leaders might never miss it.

✓ - DIA represents a unique set of problems. I readily concede that DIA has numerous responsibilities to many consumers; "national policymakers," the JCS, Overseas commanders, etc. I believe, however, that DIA must become much more selective in its distribution. If they must publish information of unique interest to a field force commander, the Washington Bureaucracy ought not to be burdened with a copy. If they wish to disseminate information to other analysts, let them do so, but no good purpose is served by touting it as an effort in support of national security.

- The systematic product review has proven much more interesting than I initially imagined. I believe it will serve a useful purpose. To be completely effective, however, we should expand it to include other publications (such as the NID and PDB).



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MEMORANDUM FOR:

SUBJECT: A Review of the DIN and the NIB

1. These impressions of the Daily Intelligence Notice and the National Intelligence Bulletin are offered with the caution that the examination of a larger sample of articles might well alter them.

2. On a general level, the review has suggested to me that, excepting extraordinarily urgent matters, articles in a current intelligence publication, however accurate and well-written themselves, must conform to certain principles if they are to be of more than momentary interest. The articles should, whenever possible, fit into a pattern of other contributions, similar not only in their subject but in their subtlety and perspective. Articles which violate the principle and which are not otherwise distinguished, fade quickly from memory, like a solitary ice cube in a glass. Thus, a DIN article of October 1, describing the test of a Swedish interceptor, was, I think, largely wasted; it is improbable that many readers made the information their own, as there were, as of late October, no subsequent articles with which to link the first. Contrariwise, a series of articles in the same publication on Portugal's political turmoil kept the readers, one suspects, aware at least of the fundamental issues and the most important personalities.

3. A second principle, perhaps a corollary of the first, is that there is a balance to be struck in each article between an occasional recapitulation of preceding events and an annoying repetition. At times, this balance is ignored and information previously reported is added, somewhat artificially, to a later article in order to give the latter greater weight. The result can be not only tedious but misleading as the rehearsal of remote possibilities increases in the reader's mind their likelihood. The National Intelligence Bulletin seemed to me generally successful in avoiding this failure. What I take to be the urgency associated with publishing DIN's, on the other hand, occasionally creates an emaciated article, whose fleshing out is apparently a temptation hard to resist.

4. Coverage of Western Europe in the Daily Intelligence Notice was uneven. The developments in Portugal following Spínola's resignation were reported quickly and, in most cases, clearly.

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But, there seemed at times to be an almost whimsical quality about the selection of other articles for publication, and one suspected that the availability of information was in some instances more telling than a consideration of its importance. The article about the Swedish fighter offended in this respect as well, as it was not worthy of the attention of national policy-makers.

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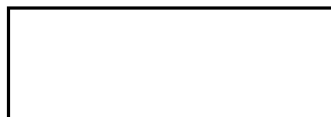
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I think both the scope and precision of the judgments would be enhanced by a larger sample. Applying the scrutiny the study demands to other publications would also be of substantive value to those performing the review.




Captain, USAF

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